

FINAL BILL REPORT

SSB 6618

C 352 L 06

Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Requiring a study to explore options to augment the current educational assessment system.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education (originally sponsored by Senators McAuliffe and Schmidt).

Senate Committee on Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
House Committee on Education
House Committee on Appropriations

Background: Beginning with the graduating class of 2008, public school students must meet the state standard on the 10th grade Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) to earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement and graduate from high school, except for eligible special education students for whom the WASL is not appropriate. Beginning in 2006, retakes of the WASL are available up to four times in the content areas in which the student did not meet the state standard.

The Legislature has directed the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to develop objective alternative assessments, which could include an appeals process, for students to demonstrate achievement of the state standards. The alternatives must be comparable in rigor to the skills and knowledge on the WASL. The Legislature must formally approve the use of any alternative assessment. Students must retake the WASL at least once prior to accessing any alternative assessment.

Summary: This act is named for former Governor Booth Gardner. The intent section provides that the Legislature continues to support the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) as part of a comprehensive assessment system. However, there is interest in exploring why some students have not been able to meet the state standards and whether additional alternative methods, options, procedures, or performance measures could be used to augment the current system and enhance the success of students.

The Washington Institute of Public Policy (Institute) is directed to conduct a study that will consist of three components:

- 1) An statistical analysis of the characteristics of the students who did not meet the state standard on the WASL and identification of possible barriers to student success or possible causes of the lack of success;
- 2) A review and identification of additional alternative assessment options that will augment the current assessment system. When identifying alternative assessment options, the Institute will include a review of alternative assessments in other states and those developed and those proposed in Washington. For each option, the study must consider costs, cultural appropriateness, whether it reliably measures a student's

ability to meet state learning standards, whether it meets the current requirement of rigor and objectivity, and any challenges to implementation, including any legislative action necessary for implementation; and

- 3) A review and identification of additional alternative methods, procedures, or combinations of performance measures to assess whether students have met the state learning standards. For each option, the study must consider the same issues addressed for the alternatives assessments plus whether the procedures, methods, or performance measures could be standardized across the state.

By December 1, 2006, the Institute must provide an interim report to the Legislature and a final report by December 2007. The interim report must include a preliminary statistical analysis of the student data and recommendations on at least two alternative assessment options, methods, procedures, or performance measures. The final report must include suggestions for any follow-up studies that the Legislature could undertake to continue to build on the information obtained in this study.

The Institute must consult with a number of listed experts and stakeholders in developing the initial list of possible options, procedures, methods, and measures to be reviewed under the second and third part of the study. OSPI and school districts are required to provide the Institute with access to all necessary data to conduct the study.

Votes on Final Passage:

Senate	47	0	
House	71	27	(House amended)
Senate	44	0	(Senate concurred)

Effective: June 7, 2006